



Harm Reduction



The objective of harm reduction is to reduce the harm and costs that the use of drugs cause to society, the drug users themselves and their families. The harm reduction service includes various social support services for people who has drug addiction, the dissemination of wide-ranging information as well as the distribution of the necessary means for safer injection and sexual life. The service is based on the knowledge that not all

drug users wish to or are able to stop using. Therefore, a trustworthy contact must be established with the users which, by providing the necessary support services, will motivate and counsel them to behave more responsibly. The harm reduction service is beneficial to society because it helps to reduce the negative socio-economic consequences related to drug addiction and helps to make the living environment safer.

In Estonia, the following services are provided at harm reduction centres:

- Counselling (peer counselling, social counselling, legal aid);
- Health-related counselling: how to more safely use drugs and avoid overdosing;
- Provision of life-saving medication (naloxone) for people injecting opioids and their families along with the relevant training, in order to prevent deaths by overdosing;
- Distribution of clean syringes and needles;
- Collection and utilization of used syringes and needles;
- Distribution of condoms and counselling on sexual health;
- Provision of washing facilities and clothing;
- Prevention of infections, early discovery of infections (e.g. HIV testing) and referral to doctors;
- Motivating and referral to receive treatment for addiction and to rehabilitation services.

At the end of the 2017, nine organisations in Estonia provided services for harm reduction. A total of 34 service centres exist in various regions of Estonia, of which 14 were stationary centres and 20 were based on outreach work. Most of the services are located in Harju County and East Viru County, although services are also provided in Tapa, Pärnu and Paide (fig. 1).

¹ See the separate fact sheet on naloxone.

Stationary

Fieldwork

- Tallinn:
1. MTÜ Convictus Eesti (2)
 2. MTÜ Pealinna Abikeskus
- Maardu:
3. MTÜ Convictus
- Tapa:
4. MTÜ Eluaken
- Kiviõli:
5. MTÜ Corrigo
- Kohtla-Järve:
6. MTÜ Allium (2)
 7. MTÜ Me Aitame Sind (2)
- Jõhvi:
8. MTÜ Corrigo
- Narva:
9. SA Viljandi Haigla (2)
- Paide:
10. Paide Sotsiaaltöökeskus



- Tallinn:
1. Põhja-Tallinn (3)
 2. Lasnamäe (2)
 3. Mustamäe (2)
 4. Õismäe (1)
 5. Kristiine (2)
6. Tapa
 7. Haljala
 8. Rakvere
 9. Kohtla-Järve
 10. Ahtme linnaosa
 11. Jõhvi linn
 12. Järve linnaosa
 13. Sompaa
 14. Oru
 15. Kiviõli
 16. Sillamäe
 17. Paldiski
 18. Vasknarva
 19. Paide
 20. Türi
 21. Pärnu

Figure 1. Location of harm reduction services in Estonia, 2017

In Estonia there are almost 5,500 harm reduction service users and the services are used over 110,000 times annually. Approximately two million syringes are distributed to injecting drug users every year via the harm reduction services. **Table 1** provides a survey of the usage of the various counselling services provided by the harm reduction services.

Table 1. Statistics on the use of harm reduction services, 2015–2017

Services	2015	2016	2017
Total service users (with a client code)	5 810	5 608	5 465
Number of times the service is used annually	138 325	132 325	110 636
Number of consultations with harm reduction specialists	50 822	47 417	43 896
Number of consultations with social workers	6 868	7 734	7 794
Number of psychological consultations	1 047	1 494	1 210
Health-related counselling	5 558	6 199	5 837
Number of distributed syringes	2 136 691	2 070 169	1 997 158